Sprint Review and Retrospective

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The various roles on my Scrum-agile Team contributed to the success of the SNHU Travel project in many different ways. The specific roles included the Scrum Master, Product Owner, Tester, and Developer. Within the SNHU Travel project, as the Scrum Master I was responsible for facilitating Scrum events and supporting the team as they worked under the agile method. These events included Sprints and Daily Scrum meetings, among others. The Sprints contributed to the success of the SNHU Travel project by providing a layout for the work to be completed in the allotted time period. This helped the team remain on the same page and focused on the same work. The Daily Scrum meetings greatly improved communication for the team, as they required the team to meet up for 15 minutes per day to discuss what work was complete, what work was to be done, and any problems they were facing for the day. Having this time set aside to communicate with each other allowed for transparency and understanding, and contributed to efficient work for SNHU Travel. Clearly, as the Scrum Master I play a very important role in keeping the team focused, efficient, and successful. The Product Owner is another important role within our agile team, as they are the direct connection to users and stakeholders, and are solely responsible for the product backlog management and creation of user stories. This contributed to the success of SNHU Travel because the Product Owner was able to discern the ongoing needs of the users and communicate them to the rest of the team to allow for important improvements to ensure the best end product. We experienced a requirement change mid-sprint and were able to swiftly and accurately handle it and incorporate the necessary changes because of the direct communication from the Product Owner. Another vital role within our team is the tester, who ensures quality and accuracy of the product by creating test cases from the user stories, and working with the developer to create an end product. This made SNHU Travel successful because the team was able to view the different test cases for user requests in order to understand requirements on functionality for the software. The last role within our team is the developer, who contributed to the success of SNHU Travel by creating flexible and adaptable code during each sprint to meets the needs of the users and stakeholders. Without a flexible development and test team, our team would not have been able to handle requirement changes as successfully as we did.

The Scrum-agile approach to the software development life cycle helped each of the user stories come to completion by creating a communicative and transparent environment between user and stakeholders and the agile team. Within agile, we have a Product Owner who is our direct line to potential users and the stakeholders. They communicate with them in order to discern their needs and then discuss the requirements with the rest of the team. User stories are then created based on the communication between our Product Owner and the users. The rest of the team then uses these user stories during development and testing of the product. Our Product Owner was able to speak directly with potential users and get information on what was most valuable to them for a travel site like SNHU Travel, and from this we created our user stories. Without an agile based approach, concentration on the users, direct communication, and potential for changes likely would not exist, so an agile approach is essential to creating these very useful user stories.

The Scrum-agile approach was able to support project completion when the project was interrupted by direction and requirement changes in a few different ways. First, we faced a layout change for our software from pages to a slideshow. We were able to handle this and still complete the project because the Scrum-agile approach allows us to be flexible and make changes as we go, instead of having rigid requirements that don’t allow for easy modifications. Our development team simply confirmed the change requirements through email communication with the Product Owner and then implemented them in the code. Another change in direction we faced was a wellness-focused vacation theme for SNHU Travel. Again, this was handled by clear communication within our team and adaptable code from the developer and tester. The ability to accommodate changes and direct and continuous communication within the agile approach made the project completion possible.

Some samples of communication between team members include clarification emails that encouraged transparency and collaboration within the team. In one email, our tester reached out to our Product Owner to get clarifications on the user stories:

“To: Product Owner

Subject: User Story Clarification

Dear Product Owner,

I have looked at the user stories you provided and am now developing test cases for the different features to determine whether the product passes or fails. I need a bit more detail regarding format so that I can be more specific within my test cases. Can you answer the following questions for me?

User Story One:

Do you want the top ten destinations in a list on the webpage, or should each destination be listed separately?

User Story Two:

Do you want the hot deals listed on a webpage, or should each deal be separate from the next?

User Story Three:

Should the set budget results be displayed on a webpage list, or should the new results be listed separately (in a slide for example) ?

Thank You,

Tester”

As you can see in the email above, our tester felt free to reach out to the Product Owner with specific questions in order to better understand the user stories and best complete their test cases.

Another communication that demonstrates the transparency and collaboration of agile is between our developer and Product Owner:

“To: Product Owner

Subject: Destination Update Clarification

Dear Product Owner,

I have reviewed the changes regarding the destinations. I am reaching out to get some further clarification on specifics for the new detox and wellness theme. Can you answer the following questions for me?

Would you like the destinations to be based on a broad location or a specific spa or retreat business?

Should the descriptions include wellness themed activities?

Should the images specifically reflect a spa-like atmosphere?

Thank you,

Developer”

As this email demonstrates, the team was able to effectively communicate during shifts in product requirements in order to deliver the best end product. Our developer needed clarification on these changes and asked specific questions so they could complete the software according to the response from the Product Owner.

There are many organizational tools and Scrum-agile principles that helped our team be successful during the SNHU Travel project. First, artifacts such as user stories and test cases allowed for clarity and understanding of what is expected from the finished product. These provided a helpful template for the development team while they were creating the code for SNHU Travel. Second, our daily Scrum meetings greatly helped with the creation of those artifacts, and also provided a dedicated space for direct communication for the team. We were able to receive communication from the Product Owner about user needs and create the user stories and test cases, as well as use those artifacts for further development of the software for SNHU Travel. Any misunderstanding or hindrances were also discussed during these meetings to ensure clarity and the creation of a working product according to outlined requirements. Lastly, the use of an electronic information radiator allowed our team to remain in constant contact with the project, and stay up to date on tasks and other information pertaining to the project. All of these Scrum-agile principles and tools allowed for SNHU Travel to be successful.

As the Scrum Master, I believe the Scrum-agile approach was effective for the SNHU Travel project. There were many pros that this approach presented during the project, including communication, flexibility, and efficiency. Communication was key in this approach, and it was mainly facilitated by the daily Scrum meetings and open email communication between team members. Flexibility is also essential to the Scrum-agile approach, and was demonstrated by our team when we encountered changes to the project requirements and handled them swiftly and effectively by updating our current work. Efficiency is also a pro within the Scrum-agile approach, as all of the principles and tools used within agile promote team-work and enhanced communication in order to complete the project accurately within the given time frame. One con that the Scrum-agile approach can present is compartmentalized fragments within the project, which is why communication is so important. For this project, we overcame that con by communicating effectively and often in order to remain transparent and be sure each team member knew what was expected of the product and therefore expected of their own section of work. This was best demonstrated through the email communication presented above. Based on all of this, I believe the Scrum-agile approach was the best method for the SNHU Travel project. This is because we faced a couple of requirement changes throughout the project, and by using the Scrum-agile approach our team was able to easily accommodate those changes by utilizing different team roles and Scrum-agile methods and principles. These changes would not have been as simple to accommodate within a waterfall method because the framing of the project would not have allowed for drastic changes. Clearly, the Scrum-agile approach was successful for the development and completion of SNHU Travel.